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Time for books : motivating children through choice, change, and chances to read

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Time for books : motivating children through choice, change, and chances to read

Abstract

This literature review and following project examine the issue of using free reading time as an instructional strategy during the school day. Research was gathered from professional articles and books on the subject of literacy learning for the purpose of attempting to determine the value of allowing students free reading time. Some important components needed in a free reading program were found to be appropriate and plentiful book selection, an appropriate environment for reading, opportunities for students to interact with each other, and positive teacher modeling. The project includes lessons plans for a teacher workshop is presented to train teachers on how to create effective free reading time in the classroom.

TIME FOR BOOKS:
MOTIVATING CHILDREN THROUGH CHOICE, CHANGE,
AND CHANCES TO READ

A Graduate Project
Submitted to the
Division of Literacy Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts In Education
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by
Amy Prime
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has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the
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This literature review and following project examine the issue of using free reading time as an instructional strategy during the school day. Research was gathered from professional articles and books on the subject of literacy learning for the purpose of attempting to determine the value of allowing students free reading time. Some important components needed in a free reading program were found to be appropriate and plentiful book selection, an appropriate environment for reading, opportunities for students to interact with each other, and positive teacher modeling. The project includes lessons plans for a teacher workshop is presented to train teachers on how to create effective free reading time in the classroom.

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Introduction

Teachers across the world are searching every day to develop practices that will turn children into people who get excited by reading. Many teachers take precious learning time during the school day to provide an opportunity for students to read quietly, from a book or other material the student has selected, without an expectation of any feedback or accountability to the teacher. This time provided has different names in different classrooms such as DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time, SSR (Sustained Silent Reading), or free reading. Some professionals, including those on the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000), question whether this practice is an effective motivator of student learning or if this time could be used in a more worthwhile way by focusing on specific reading skills.

What can teachers do to make the most of this free reading time? Some researchers suggest that adding a layer of accountability, such as recording books read in a log, can help students to keep track of their reading progress. Many teachers have seen the value of allowing children to read in pairs or groups to activate student interest and excitement in previously unknown books, or books that may not yet be at a student's independent reading level. Other educators and researchers stress the importance of getting to know the students personally to better target interest areas. Teachers can accomplish this through conferences, conversations, surveys, and observations.

Rationale for Choosing Topic

Last school year I found myself confronted, as all teachers sometimes do, with a class full of second graders who did not seem to have an inner desire to learn. I knew that if I could enhance that intrinsic motivation these students could have a more productive

school year, so I began to research various motivational practices in reading. As I did so, the common methods which kept surfacing as main motivational practices discovered by researchers were to enhance the students' desire to read by allowing them choice. This can be a scary scenario for teachers who are faced with a group of students who seem to need every direction laid out simply, clearly, and specifically to get even the smallest of tasks completed. The word "choice" can sometimes seem to equate to unruliness with a class such as the one I was working with each day. Still, being a believer in allowing my students time in each school day to read books of choice, this was one practice that I continued even with this most challenging of groups.

I recall an incident in which another teacher in my building had called into question my use of this free choice reading time in my room. She had challenged whether or not this was a valuable use of my students' learning time, which she felt would be better used to teach skills or, at the very least, insist that each student be allowed to only look at books at his or her reading level. This incident left me wondering if it was only my reading training and instincts that led me to believe that this practice was a productive use of a part of the school day for my students. This group of students had made me question it also, because of the time they seemed to spend off task when they were supposed to be enjoying a book.

Nearly half of my second graders were receiving Title 1 services. Most of them were mastering the skills of reading words, but did not transfer those skills to book reading. They never chose to read books as a free choice activity, barely engaged when I was reading aloud to them, rarely checked out books from the library, and seemed to avoid reading whenever possible. I began to feel frustration at the prospect of passing

them on to grade three without developing a love of books. These factors motivated me to begin researching ways to enhance students' desire to read, especially through allowing them time to read in the classroom.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to find research that had been conducted that would support my instincts that free reading time was a valuable learning tool for my students, as well as discovering other common motivational practices to reach all students. The secondary purpose was to discover if there is a certain structure of this free reading time that has been found to be more beneficial to students' motivation and learning than others. Examples of these structures might be using social groups during reading times, adding an "accountability" aspect to the reading time in the form of discussions or response logs, or more direct teacher interaction in the form of mini-lessons and conferencing with students about their reading.

Importance of Topic

Many teachers allow class time for students to choose a book and "just read." This literature review can serve as a resource for these teachers. Other teachers have been asked by administrators to stop providing class time for this practice as a result of the National Reading Panel report. For these teachers, this review will provide a summary of the research available on the topic to enable them to make a more informed argument to those questioning their implementation of this practice with their students. This review may also be helpful to teachers who already use free reading time in their classrooms to consider what the researchers have shown about the most effective way to use this time if it is included in the school day.

Definition of Terms

Although teachers may vary the structure of the time allotted for *free reading* in the classroom, Bryan, Fawson, and Reutzel (2003) define free reading as allowing the students time to self-select their own books and read silently. There are many other terms that have been given to this free reading time to make it more understandable and appealing to students. The two most popular names include *DEAR* which stands for Drop Everything and Read (Moore, Jones, & Miller, 1980) and *SSR* which stands for Sustained Silent Reading (Moore, Jones, & Miller, 1980). For the purposes of this review, these terms will all be used interchangeably.

The goal of teachers is to develop students who have the desire to learn for the learning itself, rather than for the reward they will get out of it. According to Wigfield and Guthrie (2002) this is what *intrinsic motivation* means. Discussion of other research will include mention of teacher *read-alouds* which are a chance for teachers to select and read literature to the class (Fitzgibbons, 1997). This time gives the teacher an opportunity to model proper expression and *fluency*, as well as to pause for discussion and interaction with the story. *Read-alouds* are a good chance for teachers to introduce new authors to students and to allow children to enjoy literacy without the “work” involved of reading it themselves. *Fluency* involves the speed, or rate at which a student reads, how accurately the words are read, and also can encompass the student’s expression and the smoothness of their reading (Rasinski & Padak, 2005). It is used as a popular measure of a students’ reading ability.

Research Questions

The purpose of this review was to discuss the researcher's findings about the validity of using class time to allow students to read literature of choice. With this purpose in mind, I was seeking to answer this question: How does allowing time for students to read self-selected literature impact reading motivation? Research into this primary question led to these secondary questions:

1. What is the influence of adding social aspects and/or response activities to traditional free reading periods?
2. What should the role of the teacher be to most effectively enhance student motivation during free reading periods?

Methodology

To begin this study of the literature, I first focused only on motivational practices found in research that described efforts to encourage children to acquire a love for reading. As my research continued I divided my search to include motivational practices that used a free reading period to enhance the desire to read, specific motivational practices such as Reader's Theater, and motivating students through personal connections. In this section I will describe my methods for locating and selecting sources to incorporate into my literature review.

Research Design

I read many different types of publications while researching this topic. I found a large variance in the way that authors in different journals presented their information. I attempted to focus as much of my inquiry as possible on those journal articles I felt were the most easy to read and simple to incorporate into my own everyday teaching.

The majority of my writing was modeled after those articles that I read from *The Reading Teacher* and *Language Arts* magazines. For example, the article by Williams and Bauer (2006) in *The Reading Teacher* was helpful in presenting information while incorporating sources and citing them correctly.

These journals were less helpful in describing the methodology of a literature review. Many of those articles lacked an author's account of how they located and analyzed sources. In this case, I referred to some more formal literature reviews available online such as Franzak's 2006 paper, which included a more thorough Methods section from which I could model my paper.

Methods for Locating Sources

To begin my research, I searched the Rod Library Databases to find articles only in the journals *The Reading Teacher* and *Language Arts*. The key words I included at this time were “motivating reading.” I expanded my search to the Rod Library education databases ERIC (EBSCO) and Wilson and found four promising articles from the journals *Reading Horizons*, *Journal of Children’s Literature*, and *Reading Today*.

After reading many of these articles and discovering the common idea that motivation could possibly be enhanced through allowing free reading in the classroom, I went back to search all education databases in the Rod Library and this time included the key words “sustained silent reading” and “motivation.” I also switched the term “sustained silent reading” for the term “DEAR.” This search resulted in many articles that appeared relevant but had no full text available. I chose to order a full text copy of some of these from Rod Library distance services. Because Reader’s Theater appeared often along with the terms “motivating readers” I keyed in “Reader’s Theater” with various spellings, which produced many results. I excluded the results that were only scripts for Reader’s Theater, and kept the ones that focused on how to structure it and the impact that it has had in specific classrooms.

There were a few other places I searched to discover writings on my topic of interest. I located some information in books that are available to professional staff here at my school where I found two books which included specific strategies that matched with reading comprehension and instruction. I also searched broader search engines online such as Google and Yahoo. These searches yielded more than one online journal article that I used in my final review of literature.

Methods for Selecting Sources

After narrowing my search of motivation to include discussion of free reading in the classroom, as well as other motivational strategies, I chose to exclude articles that were not from peer reviewed journals or from articles including opinion based themes rather than research based writings. I looked for articles that were from reputable authors on this subject. I chose to exclude studies in which the sample of students was less than five because I felt the impact of motivational practices needed to be validated by a group about the size of a regular class if it was to be helpful to most teachers who would use the practice with their entire classes.

I began looking for lower elementary research and excluded any research that involved students over the seventh grade. This was due to the fact that I am an early childhood educator and I wanted the research to be relevant to my own classroom. This led me to exclude many articles that I discovered involving studies of SSR or Reader's Theater in the high school grades. Also, because I was interested in motivation rather than academic achievement, I was also looking for studies that measured attitude change in students receiving these specific motivational strategies rather than a change in reading test scores.

Procedures for Analyzing Sources

As I read through each journal article that I had chosen, I could usually get a good idea from the first two pages whether or not the information presented was going to fit within my topic of interest. There are several articles that I set aside after concluding that they did not meet my requirements for use. For the many articles that I did find pertinent,

I read the entire thing while highlighting important quotations and ideas that I felt I may be able to include in my final paper, or which developed my ideas further.

When I completed a large number of articles I began to use my highlighter to label the first page of each within three main groupings that I was beginning to see emerging. The first group of articles had a focus on the motivational aspect of the free reading strategy. The second group of articles dealt mainly with what role the teacher would play during the free reading periods in a classroom. The third group of articles had to do with the actual structure and common classroom practices involved with this free reading time. These three main areas became the focus of my summaries of the literature and guided the sorting of any future research that I encountered.

The books that I had available also had sections that fell into these general and wide categories that I had created with the journal articles. The best way I found to sort the materials I discovered in books was to photocopy each section that dealt with my three main areas and put them together in a folder with the similar articles. With this system, if a book had chapters or sections that dealt with more than one of my categories I could still have them all grouped together without having to go back to continuously reference and search through the book. This also enabled me to return books to libraries and staff members and still have the material that I might need later in writing my literature review.

Review of the Literature

A common component listed in studies of how to motivate students to read was allowing time during the school day for the students simply to read a book. Although researchers have shown that providing time during the school day for students to read books of choice is still a common practice in classrooms today, major recommendations of the National Reading Panel (NRP) released in its April 2000 report did not include “free reading” time as an essential component of a successful literacy curriculum. Questions remained for the panel about whether that time might be better spent teaching children to become more skilled readers. Based on the findings of the NRP, the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) instructed teachers to encourage students to read more outside of school rather than allocating instructional time for independent reading. They suggested that independent reading may be appropriate in school in the moments when students “have completed one activity and are waiting for another to begin” (2003). Researchers and educators have conducted research to attempt to either support or disprove this conclusion by measuring the effectiveness of using learning time to allow students personal book selection, as well as attempting to discover the most valuable way for teachers and students to use this time if it is provided. Several respected educators and researchers, such as Stephen Krashen, suggest that not all of the research done on this topic was included in the results of the NRP and therefore its findings are not representative of the true effectiveness of the practice (2005).

I have divided my areas of study into three sections. First, I have surveyed what researchers have discovered about how teachers are currently using independent reading time in their classrooms and what effect, if any, this has had on the motivation of the

students to read. Next, I have reviewed specific classroom procedures that are followed in the classrooms where SSR time is allowed. Finally, I have discussed the various roles of the teacher during reading times in classrooms that have been studied.

Free Reading as a Motivational Practice

There have been many studies conducted to help educators discover what procedures they can put into place in classrooms to increase students' desire to read. Richard Allington (2005) lists both motivation and extended opportunities to read as equally important to reading instruction as the more measurable skills such as fluency and phonemic awareness. Baker, Dreher, and Guthrie (2000) declared that "if motivation is treated as secondary to the acquisition of basic reading skills, we risk creating classrooms filled with children who can read but choose not to" (p. 1). Bryan, Fawson, and Reutzel (2003) added that "...a love of reading, however, often does not come naturally" (p. 50). While completing various studies regarding the issue of motivation, researchers suggest that the amount of time a child spends reading correlates directly with that child's ability as a reader. In many of the classrooms in which research was conducted time was allotted for free reading (Allington 2005, Guthrie, 2006).

The time being spent on actual reading during reading lessons in today's classrooms is relatively small according to McNinch, Shaffer, Campbell, and Rakes (1998). Providing free reading time has been a way for teachers to allow students time to practice the skills that they are learning during these reading lesson times.

Researchers have shown that the way children perceive themselves as readers has a great deal to do with whether they are successful in reading (Scott, 1996). Wigfield and Guthrie (1995) point out that if a child wants to succeed at a task, if the child finds it

interesting, useful, and important, then she will have a much greater chance of putting forth a significant effort at that task. The theory behind providing free reading time is directly related to these findings. A child is able to select any reading material she would like within the limits of appropriateness. That child will most likely choose a book she has a great interest in, and will therefore have more desire to complete the task of reading it. If a student has chosen a book below his reading level, he will gain “fluency” practice. If a student chooses a book above his reading level, she will be challenged and will be exposed to new vocabulary. A student who chooses to read books at his reading level will be getting the practice he needs to advance to a higher reading level. Krashen (2006) went even further to say that “free reading is the source of our reading prowess and much of our vocabulary and spelling development, as well as our ability to understand sophisticated phrases and write coherent prose” (p. 43). He encouraged 10-15 minutes of free voluntary reading time during each classroom day. Henk and Meinick (1995) have found that if students have this positive self-image as readers they will find reading gratifying, be successful in reading comprehension, have positive experiences with books, and seek out more challenging reading materials.

Research was conducted by Henk and Melnick (1995) and others such as Fitzgibbons (1997) who used various attitude surveys to attempt to discover if giving students these chances to read actually made them like reading better. A common instrument used, such as in the study conducted by Fitzgibbons (1997), was the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. Fitzgibbons discusses the importance of educators being aware of what factors influence students’ reading motivation. She concluded that

student attitudes were more favorable about reading after initiating an SSR program and teacher “read-alouds” to motivate reading.

This idea of book choice is an essential component of the free reading time.

Morrow and Sharkey (1993) have stated that having choice compels students to participate in literacy activities in a more meaningful way. Krashen (2006) goes even farther to say that the use of free reading time produces students who do just as well on standardized tests as students who only receive skill-based instruction. Johnson and Blair (2003) report that test scores actually increase when independent reading is added to classrooms.

Classroom Practices and Procedures

With much of the research supporting the use of free reading time during the school day, why was the practice not found to be essential by the NRP? The panel cited a lack of evidence as the factor which prevented them from forming a decisive opinion about the benefits or drawbacks of this classroom procedure. The panel did not find enough studies that met their criteria of design to justify promoting a positive causal relationship between SSR and reading improvement (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008).

Questions remain for other researchers about the validity of the strategy as being beneficial for *all* students. Many teachers, such as those discussed in the article by Kelly and Clausen-Grace (2006), have reported having students who are not actively engaged during the reading time provided, or in fact doing things to avoid reading. Researchers studied what could be done for these students so that they were receiving the same benefits of this time as their peers who had more “intrinsic motivation” to use the time as it was designed. It was found that these children could benefit by having a social

component added into the reading time. Including an element of accountability also helped to maintain motivation and interest.

A study was conducted by Nagy, Campenni, and Shaw (2000) to determine what specific procedures were being followed by those teachers who did provide an independent reading time in their classrooms. The procedures they analyzed were how often the teachers provided this time to students, what materials the students were allowed to read during these sessions, and whether or not the students were assessed on their reading in any way. The teachers were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the independent reading program overall. They discovered that, although some things were fairly consistent between classrooms, other procedures within each classroom varied widely. Two of the largest areas of consistency were in satisfaction with the program and with the consistency of when the students were asked to read during the school day. On a 10 point scale (with 10 being the most satisfied), the teachers reported an average of 7.5 satisfaction level which indicated that they were very satisfied. A large majority, 85%, of teachers held the independent reading time at a consistent time. Some of the areas with more disparity included whether or not the students had complete free choice of reading material, if there was a required response activity of any kind, and what the teacher was doing during the time when the students were free reading.

Nagy, Campenni, and Shaw's (2000) findings of those areas of disparity between teachers include if students are accountable to complete any activities corresponding to their independent reading, what the teacher does while the students read, and if the students are allowed free choice of reading materials lead to questions. Other articles providing research on what have been discovered to be successful practices regarding

free reading time addressed these questions. Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006) reported positive results when they implemented specific procedures during this time, which they called the R5 Strategy. The five R's in this strategy referred to reading, relaxing, reflecting, responding, and rapping. Reading and relaxing were the first part of the time provided, with the students being required to have a book ready prior to the start of the free reading time and not being allowed to be up and moving around once the time had started. The students were then asked to reflect and respond by recording the chosen book in a reading log and providing a very brief response to a provided sentence starter. After this was complete, the students were allowed to discuss the book they had read with a partner.

Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2000) were not the only researchers to conclude that having a social component added in to the free reading period helped to enhance student use of the reading time. Bryan, Fawson, and Reutzel (2003) stated that "Strangely, little consideration has been given to combining the power of social interaction and feedback through discussion with SSR to increase its effectiveness in encouraging highly engaged reading among children" (p. 52). They found that non-engaged readers benefited from brief, adult-led discussions about their reading during SSR times, and that these discussions could impact the student's reading engagement during SSR for weeks afterward. Wilhelm and Smith (2006) listed the "social dimension" of literacy as an important motivator, especially for boys. Morrow and Sharkey (1993) studied the impact of Independent Reading and Writing Periods (IRWP) in which the students were allowed to choose whether to work alone or with others on literacy activities. The authors revealed the positive benefits of the social aspect of the program and listed these as

collaboration, conflict resolution skills, peer tutoring, decision making, and the chance to offer information. New friendships and bonds, as well as book trading and sharing were cited as positive results from being allowed to partner with others during reading time in an article written by Lee-Daniels and Murray (2000).

The Teacher's Role in Motivating Readers

One of the long accepted features of SSR, which was described by Lyman Hunt in 1970, is that the teacher is to be a positive role model during the allotted time during the day (Nagy, Campenni, & Shaw, 2000). The way a teacher was to do this was by portraying a positive attitude about reading to the students, as well as by reading silently with the students during the free reading period. Eighty percent of the teachers surveyed by Nagy, Campenni and Shaw reported they usually read while the students did. Some researchers have begun to call into question whether this is actually the best use of the teacher's time during that period.

Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006) pointed out that the teacher reading while the students read inhibits the teacher's ability to provide any kind of support to the students during this time. The teacher involved in this study chose instead to model her love of reading by reading aloud and leading book talks at other points during the school day. This left her available during independent reading time to help match students to books and monitor their reading.

Bryan, Fawson, and Reutzel (2003) argued that "research has failed to establish the value of teachers serving as 'silent reading models' on either achievement or engagement of elementary-aged students" (p. 49). They added that students may even see the teacher participating in silent reading with them as phony and be overlooked

rather than helpful. Another questionable role of teachers they discovered was quite common in the authors' classroom observations was teachers who continuously called across the room to remind students to stay on task. Bryan, Fawson, and Reutzel offered these alternatives to teachers during independent reading times:

1. Monitor small group literature discussions with non-engaged readers.
2. Have one-on-one literature discussions with students.
3. Spend the time discovering what students are reading and making book recommendations to students.
4. Circulate and provide encouragement or reading assistance where necessary.

Though research was conducted on many different variations and possibilities of ways to alter free reading periods in the classroom and what the teacher's role should be during this time, researchers maintained the opinion that each educator needs to make decisions based on current students and curriculum. They also agreed that new procedures may take time to provide positive results and that teachers should be prepared to try several procedures during reading times before deciding what works best in each classroom.

Discussion

The NRP and the NCLB legislation recommend that educators focus strongly on certain areas of reading instruction including phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension. While it is true that each of these skills cannot be completely monitored during free reading times, they are all being practiced nonetheless. There have been comparisons made to sports or music, where following the panel's recommendations would be similar to allowing athletes only to practice drills but not scrimmage, or musicians to run scales but not attempt to play a piece of music. If students are practicing all of the essential skills of reading, but not given the time to put those skills to the test and actually read are we shortchanging them? Although much research did not meet the scientific criteria to be allowed into consideration for the panel's proposals, there has been much written and studied about the value of SSR as shown by this review of literature. For example, research has shown that SSR is at least as effective as conventional teaching methods in helping children acquire those aspects of reading that are measured by standardized tests (Krashen 2006). Krashen (2005) says of SSR, "I actually concluded that it was at least as good as and often better than 'regular' instruction" (p. 445). Similarly, Elaine Garan (2008) states that "...any conclusions that SSR does not benefit children cannot be a derivation of sound data" (p. 338). The argument may be made that how a teacher uses free reading in the classroom can be as important as whether it is used at all.

Guthrie (2001) discusses the association between long periods of engaged reading and reading success. He notes the following, "For 9-year-olds on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1998, the correlation between the

indicator of engaged reading and reading comprehension achievement was higher than any demographic characteristic such as gender, income, or ethnicity (Guthrie et al., 2001). Even more surprising and significant was the finding that 9-year-olds whose family background was characterized by low income and low education, but who were highly engaged readers, substantially outscored students who came from backgrounds with higher education and higher income, but who themselves were less engaged readers. Based on a massive sample, this finding suggests the stunning conclusion that engaged reading can overcome traditional barriers to reading achievement, including gender, parental education, and income” (p. 4).

Several common components of free reading time surfaced in this review of literature. These components included:

- An appropriate environment for reading. Is the reading space comfortable and inviting? Is the lighting sufficient and not too harsh? Is there enough room for students to have their own space when reading independently so as not to be distracted by other readers? Is there a quiet space for teachers to discuss books with students?
- Books! Students should have access to a wide selection of age appropriate books. This can either be through the classroom library, the school library, or a combination of locations. There should be a range of reading levels available in the books to meet the needs of all students. The books provided should represent many genres and subjects to enhance interest and motivation for students.

- Opportunities for interaction. Many studies have noted the power of shared reading and time to talk about books on reading motivation. Students often choose to read a new book because it has been talked about by a friend. Sharing books promotes comprehension. Ideas are tested and clarified as they are discussed between students or between students and a teacher. Providing a chance for children to talk about what they are about to read, what they are reading, or what they have finished reading can be a powerful tool to keep them reading, and to spread reading throughout a classroom.
- Teacher modeling. While researchers disagree about the importance of teachers fully participating in SSR time, they do agree that teachers should provide a positive role model for students on correct reading and enthusiasm for reading throughout the school day. One of the most widely used forms of modeling in classrooms is the teacher read-aloud. There are several benefits to the teacher read-aloud. The students are exposed to types of books that they may not have chosen to read on their own which can prompt them to widen their book genre and style selection in the future. The students are able to hear a correct model of reading fluency which can enhance their own fluency. The students are also able to “read” and enjoy a book that may be well beyond their reading level. This can expose them to new vocabulary and content which may transfer to their own reading in the future. Modeling a love of books can induce students to become more positive about reading.

Project

This project is intended for use as a teacher workshop consisting of a series of in-service sessions. The workshop would be appropriate for staff members who are interested in beginning a free reading program in their classrooms but need guidance in doing so, for teachers who already use free reading as part of their school day but are feeling dissatisfied with the implementation, and for teachers who would like information about current research regarding free reading in classrooms.

The packet for the workshop includes teacher worksheets, lesson plans, and hand-outs, as well as presenter instructions. It is designed so that the sessions could be led by any teacher who had studied the materials and that hand-outs could be selected and copied into a packet for participants to use during the sessions based on their grade level, interest, and needs.

The best timing for these instructional sessions would be within the first two to three months of a new school year. This would give teachers the opportunity to use what they have learned for the rest of the year, as well as to best match what they have learned to the needs of their current group of students.

Implementation

A teacher workshop format was decided upon to best address the issues examined in my research. With this format, I would be able to address a large number of teachers at once, while providing them with current research and action steps that they would be able to use immediately in their classrooms to enhance existing free reading programs, or the knowledge and ability to create a free reading program if none already existed.

My first step in designing this program was to consider the amount of time needed. Because of the active nature of the workshop and the need for teachers to be able to try out some of the suggestions between sessions, it was necessary to plan for these sessions to occur during a school year. It would be ideal for the workshop to occur at the start of a new school year to give teachers a chance to quickly implement their new learning throughout the year to benefit the students in the classroom. Therefore, I chose to make the workshop three sessions in length, with each session lasting approximately 2 hours.

The overarching goal of the entire workshop is to support the use of free reading time in classrooms to promote reading motivation and to provide teachers with a variety of strategies to make the most effective use of this time to meet the reading needs of all students. With that main goal in mind, these more specific outcomes were developed:

- The participants will become familiar with current research regarding free reading practices in classrooms.
- The participants will reflect on their own beliefs and current practices regarding free reading in their own classrooms.

- The participants will become actively engaged in the processes of sharing concerns, creating goals, and applying new reading practices in their classrooms.
- The participants will involve students in shaping the free reading practices in their classrooms.
- The participants will observe free reading sessions in another classroom.
- The participants will create a free reading plan for their own classroom to put into practice and modify as needed.

The sessions are designed to maximize teacher participation and input, while also presenting new and applicable information at each one. The agendas are as follows:

Session #1:

- Introduce teachers to the contradicting viewpoints surrounding free reading practices.
- Allow teachers time to explore their current beliefs about free reading.
- Ask teachers to come up with goals regarding reading in their classrooms.
- Present current research regarding free reading.
- Allow time between sessions for teachers to obtain feedback from students about reading.

Session #2:

- Teachers will share and discuss information gathered from students between sessions.
- Problems and challenges with implementing free reading periods will be discussed.
- Teachers will be allowed time to devise solutions to these problems.

- Helpful hints and suggestions will be provided to teachers.
- Teachers will read and discuss an article provided by the presenter about free reading.
- Allow time between sessions for teachers to visit another teacher's classroom during free reading time and record observations.

Session #3:

- Teachers will share, discuss, and categorize observations made in other teachers' classrooms.
- Presenter will share the model of free reading that is currently being used in her classroom.
- Teachers will record an action plan that they will begin to use in their own classroom.
- Time for questions and discussion will be given.

During these sessions, teachers will be provided with materials that they can use in their classrooms if they choose, or use as samples to create what will work for them in their own classrooms (see Appendixes). More unstructured sessions could be added at a later date to review with teachers and address any questions or concerns that have been discovered as they have implemented their new action plan. This could also be a time of sharing successes and new ideas developed with others.

The planning of this workshop was gradual. I kept in mind the things I always look for in workshops I choose to attend. These things are applicability to my everyday teaching, active engagement, and materials that can be used right away. I considered the steps I have gone through in these past two years as I have reshaped my own free reading

program and attempted to put them into a structure that would allow participants the same process in less amount of time. I used many of the resources I discovered during my research and tried to include many of them for the workshop participants.

Conclusions

During the process of working on this project, I often thought back to that colleague of mine who originally challenged my use of free reading time in the classroom. At the time, I had strong beliefs about what I was doing, but wasn't able to articulate well my reasons. After completing this project, I would be able to argue strongly for my practices if the situation should ever arise again and back them up with research and personal experience.

A valuable aspect of working on this project was the amount of time I was able to devote to thinking about and planning my role as a teacher educator. In doing so, I reflected on what types of continuing education workshops have made the most impact on my teaching. In other words, what was it about those workshops that made me able to remember what I had learned and apply it to my own classroom? I decided that the most important things to focus on were:

1. Teacher participation. Just as for our students, teachers need to be active learners. They have years of experience to draw from and share with others so they need to be included in any learning by teaching others in the group as well. If they are moving around, discussing, sharing, and creating, they will be more likely to make connections to their own teaching and it will enhance the learning for all of the other participants. The least effective sessions have been ones where we have been "talked at" the whole time, so I wanted to avoid that as much as possible.
2. Research. Most of teachers do not have time to spend reading the most current journal articles on a subject. I felt that a good presenter would have that part

taken care of and relay that information to the participants in a succinct and memorable way.

3. Application. The workshop materials had to not only be relevant, but immediately applicable to the teachers. They had to be able to go right back to their classrooms after each session and have something they could try that might work to enhance their students' learning.
4. Importance. It was important to me to try to communicate the importance of what I was teaching about. It is my hope that through these sessions, the teachers were able to leave knowing that giving their kids some time to read during the school day, even if it isn't to the extent that was described by the readings and by my example, really is something important for their literacy development.

It is my hope that I have provided some research and procedures that might be helpful to other educators seeking information about the value of free reading or wanting to implement or improve the free reading time in their own classrooms or buildings.

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Appendix A: Session 1, Objectives & Materials

Session 1 Objectives:

- Introduce teachers to the differing views on the subject of spending class time for free reading
- Allow teachers to reflect on their current beliefs and practices regarding free reading
- Present researchers beliefs about free reading in the classroom
- Allow teachers to generate and share the long-term goals of reading instruction.
- Have teachers gather information from students about how they are able to read most comfortably and effectively

Materials Needed:

PowerPoint presentation, computer, projector

Prizes for warm-up activity

Copies of Attitude survey

Copies of Exit Survey

Copies of Student reading survey

Scenario cards

Poster paper, markers, tape

Appendix B: Session 1, Workshop Title Page



Creating Effective Free Reading Time in the Classroom

**A Teacher Workshop and Resource Packet
Created by Amy Prime
Emerson Hough Elementary School
Newton, Iowa
March 2009**

Appendix C: Session 1, Workshop Purpose Statement

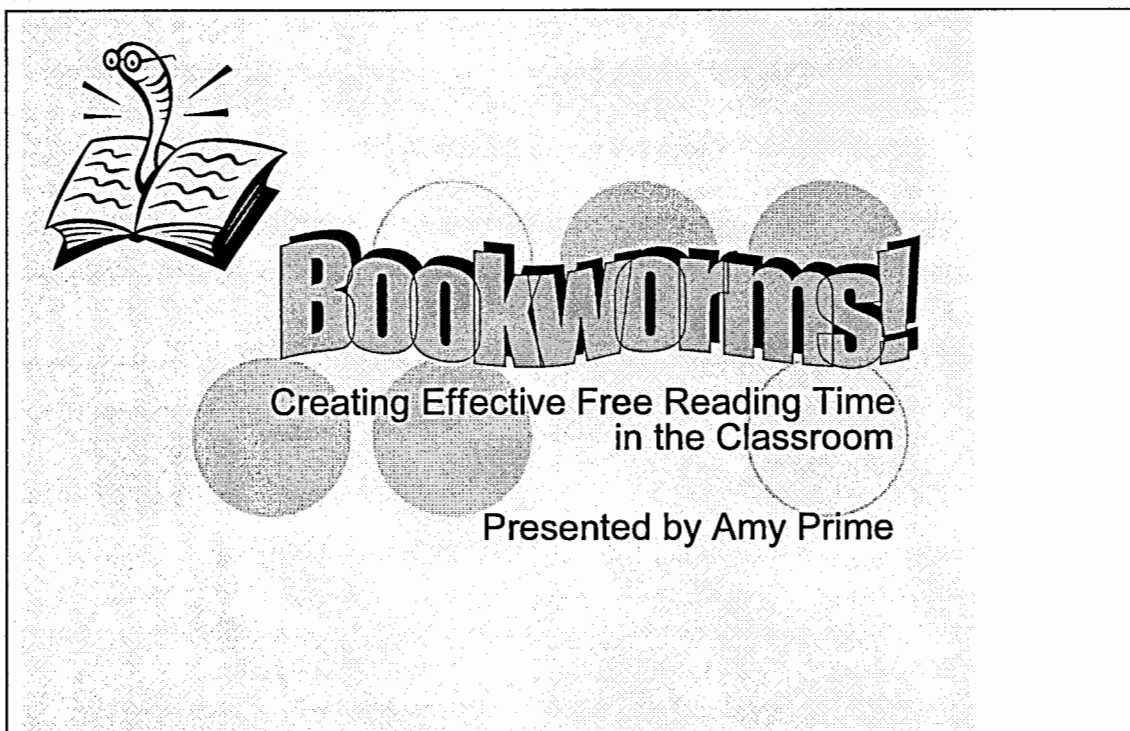
Purpose Statement

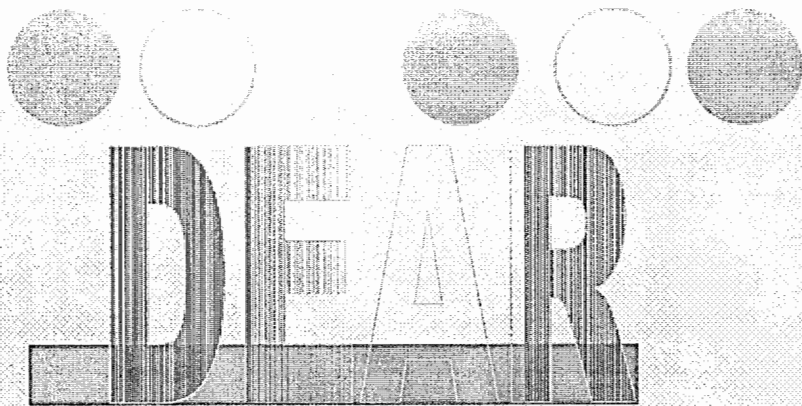
This workshop is intended to support the use of free reading time in classrooms to promote reading motivation and to provide teachers with a variety of strategies to make the most effective use of this time to meet the reading needs of all students.

Appendix D: Session 1, Warm-up Activity-Presenter Notes and PowerPoint Slides

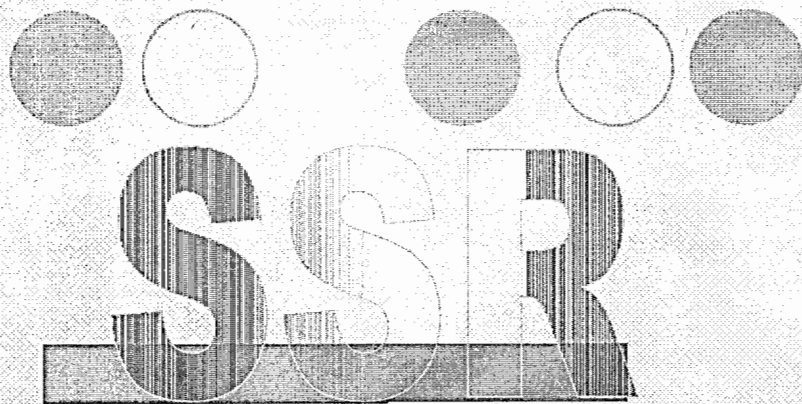
Warm-Up activity presenter procedures:

- On the PowerPoint slides, show some of the common (and not-so-common) acronyms used in schools for free reading time.
- Let participants guess what they stand for and throw out prizes to those who guess them correctly.

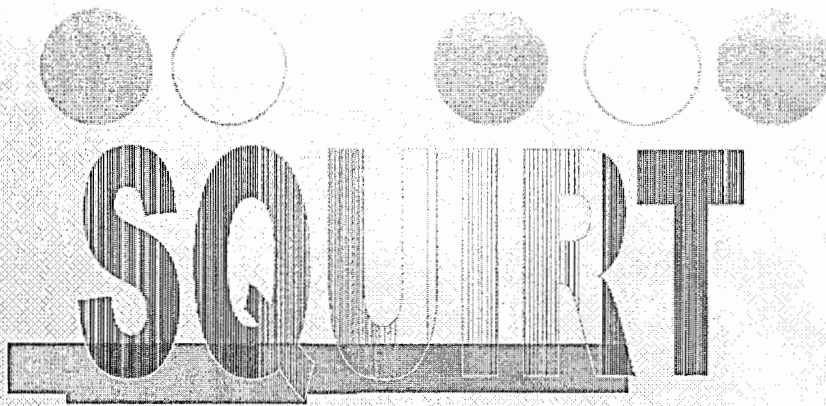




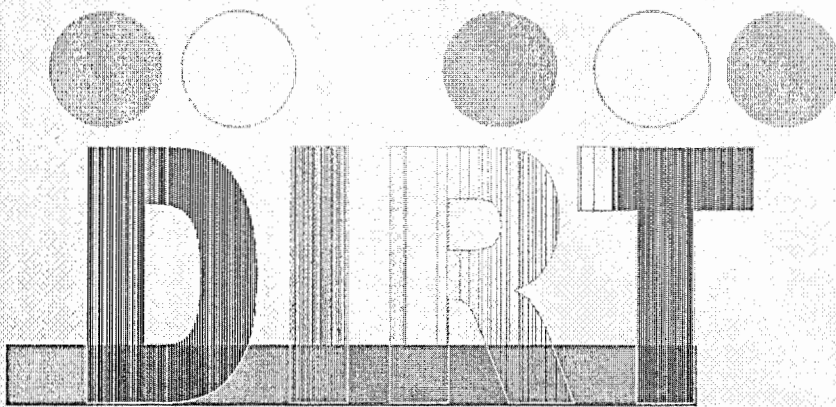
Drop Everything and Read



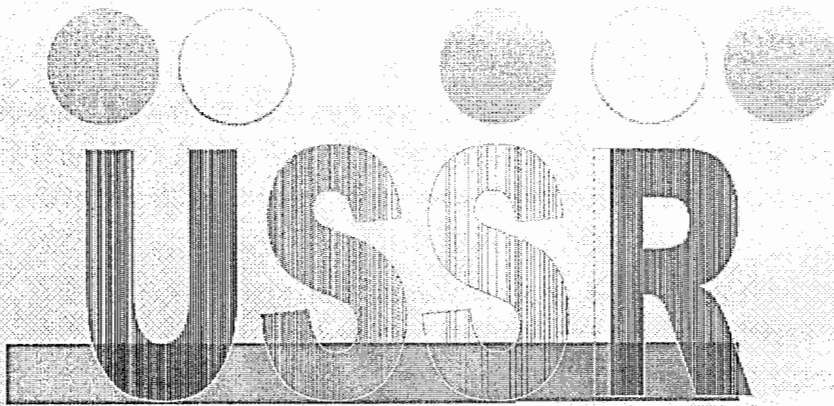
Sustained Silent Reading



Sustained Quiet Uninterrupted
Independent Reading Time



Daily Individual Reading Time

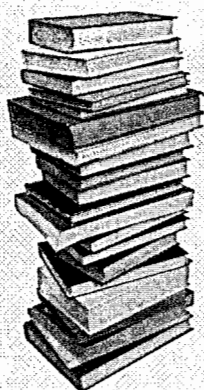


Uninterrupted Silent Sustained Reading

Appendix E: Session 1, Activity 1-Presenter Notes and PowerPoint Slides

Activity #1 presenter procedures:

- Use the PowerPoint presentation to briefly describe the conflicting views that are currently expressed about allowing class time for free reading.
- Allow participants to complete the Classroom Reading Survey independently. It is provided on the PowerPoint to guide teachers through and monitor time spent. Let teachers know that the information collected on the survey will be used to guide discussion today and in the future, as well as to monitor any changing attitudes throughout the program.
- Provide time for participants to discuss their answers on the survey in table groups.
- Have each table group record their thoughts in three categories: 1. Things we agree on 2. Things we disagree about and 3. Things we aren't sure about.
- Table groups can share out some of these thoughts for the whole group and the presenter can record some ideas in the front of the room.



There are differing beliefs about the value of free reading time in the classroom. Here is a quick look at the two main viewpoints.

A brief overview of some reasons teachers support free reading time...

- Free reading is motivational to students.
- The more they read, the better readers they will become.
- Providing time to practice reading skills is important.
- Reading a book of choice is an important element in an otherwise scripted reading atmosphere.

A brief overview of some reasons teachers do not support free reading time...

- There is not enough class time in the day to devote to it.
- The students' time would be better spent working on reading skills.
- I can assign free reading as homework.
- The kids do not really read when I give them time anyway.
- It was not supported by the National Reading Panel.

What the National Reading Panel and No Child Left Behind Legislation say about free reading

The following are elements that should be included in the content of any basal reading program:

- 1. phonemic awareness instruction**
- 2. systematic, explicit phonics instruction**
- 3. fluency instruction**
- 4. vocabulary instruction**
- 5. text comprehension instruction**

There was not enough scientifically based research to support the use of free reading in the classroom.

Publications put out by government organizations based on the NRP report suggest only using free reading when a child has finished other work, or at home.

Classroom Reading Survey

- Do you currently use free reading time in your classroom?
- Do you currently read books aloud to your students?
- On a scale from 1-5, with one being not at all important, how important do you believe it is to allow free reading time during the school day?

Classroom Reading Survey cont...

- Complete this sentence: Free reading time in a classroom should look like...
- Complete this sentence: During free reading time the teacher should be...
- Are these statements true?
 - Free reading is a waste of classroom time.
 - Students should be allowed to choose any book to read during free reading time.
 - Teachers should also be reading a book during free reading time.
 - Guided oral reading is more beneficial to promoting reading skills than free reading.
 - Free reading is only beneficial after students are successful independent readers.
 - Free reading is only effective if students are reading books at their current reading level.

Appendix F: Session 1, Activity 2-Presenter Notes and PowerPoint Slides

Activity #2 presenter procedures:

- Arrange the teachers in groups of three.
- Give each teacher in the group one of the following three scenarios.
- Have the teachers each read their scenario to the group one at a time and answer the question.

1. The basketball coach spends each practice carefully running drills. The kids practice dribbling, shooting free throws, lifting weights, and running. They become strong and fast. They rarely miss a shot and are great at handling the ball but when the time comes for the first game, they get beaten terribly. Why?

2. The flute player practices scales faithfully each day. She becomes expert at correct mouth position, fingering, and has beautiful tone. When presented with a piece of music she stumbles and does not play it successfully. Why?

3. The 15-year-old studies the driver's manual from cover to cover. He can easily tell you what each part of the car does and what each gauge measures. When put in a car on the street, he ends up in a fender bender. Why?

- Participants should be able to quickly and easily make the connection that it is silly to work on all individual skills of any new learning without providing the student an opportunity to continuously practice this new learning in a real way.
- Have teachers name all of the individual skills that go into becoming a reader (phonics, comprehension, etc.)
- Have each group come up with an "ultimate goal" of our reading instruction.
- Post these goals around the room to focus on during this and future sessions.

- **Present the following quotes from researchers to the participants in the form of a PowerPoint (if possible, tie them directly to concerns expressed during activity #1):**

"If we don't allow students to read in school at the same time that we tout the wonders of reading, what message are we sending to students about our values?"

-Garan & DeVoogd 2008

"Leaving independent reading to be accomplished at home makes three assumptions: that students are independent readers, that they have access to books they can and want to read, and that they each have a purpose for reading"

-Clausen-Grace & Kelley 2007

"Research has shown that SSR is at least as effective as conventional teaching methods in helping children acquire those aspects of reading that are measured by standardized tests."

-Krashen, 2006

"These programs include more than 'just letting kids read.' They set aside time to make sure children have a chance to read, they provide access to good books, and they do things that encourage reading."

-Krashen 2005

But what about the NRP and NCLB?

"The NRP did not consider any studies lasting longer than one academic year..."

-Krashen 2005

"...there were hundreds of studies to support SSR, but because they did not meet the panel's narrow selection criteria, the NRP excluded them."

-Garan & DeVoogd 2008

"Good teaching, effective teaching, is not just about using whatever science says 'usually' works best. It is all about finding out what works best for the individual child and the group of children in front of you."

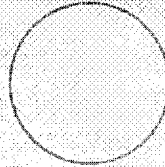
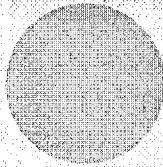
"But I also worry that the many mandates for scientific reading instruction routinely ignore all the scientific evidence on how to develop children who will invest huge amounts of personal energy in reading and learning to read."

-Allington 2005

"Interestingly, the NRP never stated that independent reading should be eliminated; they actually recommended that more research be done in this area."

-Clausen-Grace & Kelley 2007

Let's take a look at what some experts in the field have to say about free reading...



If we don't allow students to read in school at the same time that we tout the wonders of reading, what message are we sending to students about our values?

-Garan & DeVogd 2008

Leaving independent reading to be accomplished at home makes three assumptions: that students are independent readers, that they have access to books they can and want to read, and that they each have a purpose for reading.



Clausen-Grace & Kelley 2007

Time spent reading is the best predictor of reading and writing achievement.



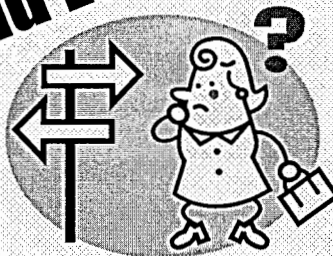
Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding 1988

*These programs do more than
"just letting kids read." They set
aside time to make sure
children have a chance to read,
they provide access to good
books, and they do things that
encourage reading.*

Krashen 2005



**But what about
the National
Reading Panel
and No Child Left
Behind?**



*The NRP did not
consider any studies
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-Krashen 2005



*Good teaching, effective
teaching, is not just
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about finding out what
works best for the
individual child and the
group of children in
front of you.*

Allington 2005



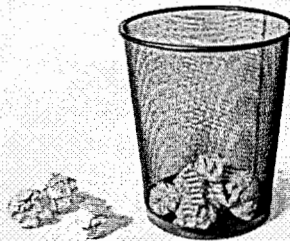


-Allington 2005
continued...

But I also worry that the many mandates for scientific reading instruction routinely ignore all the scientific evidence on how to develop children who will invest huge amounts of personal energy in reading and learning to read.

...there were hundreds of studies to support SSR, but because they did not meet the panels narrow selection criteria, the NRP excluded them.

-Garan & DeVogd 2008



Interestingly, the NRP
never stated that
independent reading
should be eliminated;
they actually
recommended that more
research be done in this
area.



-Clausen-Grace & Kelley 2007

Appendix G: Session 1, Activity 3-Presenter Notes and Handouts

Activity #3 presenter procedures:

- **Discuss and assign homework activity for teachers to complete before the next session. They need to discuss reading with their students and have them each complete a survey (or complete it for them if they are not yet writers). They can choose the survey I have created or they can choose the Independent Reading Attitude Survey by Wutz and Wedwick (2005).**
- **Have teachers complete the exit survey for the first session.**

Classroom Reading Survey

1. Do you currently provide free reading time to your students? Yes No

If yes, how often? _____ times per week

If no, complete this sentence: I do not use free reading in my classroom because _____.

2. Do you currently read books aloud to your students?

Yes No

If yes, how often? _____ times per week

3. Rate your feelings. I believe allowing free reading time during the school day is:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| Not at all important | | | | Very Important |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. Complete this sentence: Free reading time in a classroom should look like _____.

5. Complete this sentence: During free reading time the teacher should be _____.

6. Check all statements that you believe are true:

☐ **Free reading is a waste of classroom time.**

☐ **Students should be allowed to choose any book to read during free reading time.**

☐ **Teachers should also be reading a book during free reading time.**

☐ **Guided oral reading is more beneficial to promoting reading skills than free reading.**

☐ **Free reading is only beneficial after students are successful independent readers.**

☐ **Free reading is only effective if student are reading books at their current reading level.**

Student Classroom Reading Survey



1. My favorite place to read in my classroom is _____

_____.

2. My favorite kinds of books to read are _____

_____.

3. How do you feel about choosing books at the right level for you?

I need help

I am good at this

4. My classroom would be a better place to read if _____

_____.

5. The best thing about free reading in my classroom is _____

_____.

6. I would like free reading time better if _____

_____.

7. During free reading time I would like my teacher to _____

_____.

Exit Survey Session #1

Please complete this survey as completely as possible. Names are optional!

1 disagree 2 unsure 3 agree

1. _____ Materials presented were relevant to my teaching and my classroom.
2. _____ Presentation kept me engaged and active throughout.
3. _____ Presenter was prepared to answer questions raised.
4. _____ I learned something new and helpful from this presentation.
5. Questions I still have or things I hope will be covered during future sessions....

Appendix H: Session 2, Objectives & Materials

Session 2 Objectives:

- Teachers will share out findings gathered from students about how they like to read
- Teachers will share problems they face with the implementation of free reading time in their classrooms and brainstorm solutions to these problems
- Presenter will share helpful tips for creating successful free reading time
- Teachers will explore one teacher's free reading structure in her classroom

Materials Needed:

Poster paper, markers, tape
PowerPoint presentation and computer projector
Copies of Clausen-Grace and Kelley article
Copies of Free Reading Tips
Copies of Exit Survey
Copies of Reflection/record sheet

Appendix I: Session 2, Activity 1-Presenter Notes, PowerPoint Slides, and Handouts

Activity #1 presenter procedures:

- Have the participants come up with struggles they face when implementing free reading time in their classroom. Some things listed may include:

- students not “really reading”—just looking at pages or staring
- having behaviors to avoid reading such as asking to go to the restroom, switch books, etc.
- students reading books that are not at their appropriate reading level
- disruptive behaviors such as talking to others
- feelings of discomfort with the lack of accountability for student reading

- After all ideas have been shared, assign one thing on the list to each teacher group. The teachers must brainstorm “fixes” for the problem they are assigned.
- Share with the group.
- Provide hand-out of tips to teachers, and allow them to add any of the ideas shared by the group that they feel would be helpful in their own classrooms.

Tips For Creating a Successful Free Reading Time

- Provide time before to take care of book selections, rest room breaks, etc.
- Make sure students have a book or books that will last the entire time
- Have a consistent time during the day to read
- Have students find their own space, away from others
- Know what your students are reading
- Make sure students have been trained how to select appropriate books
- At least periodically, have some measure of accountability
- Others?

Tips for Creating a Successful Free Reading Time

1. Provide time prior to free reading time to go to the bathroom and get drinks. No one may do these things during reading time.
2. Students must have a book or books that will last them the entire reading period. They should not need to get up to switch or get a new book because they have finished.
3. If possible, have free reading at a consistent time daily to promote student awareness of expectations.
4. Have each student find their "own space" in the room to read, away from others.
5. Be aware of what your students are reading. This will allow you to make helpful suggestions for future reading and will promote student engagement with what they are reading.
6. Make sure students have been trained in how to select appropriate books.
7. Have some measure of accountability. (Response log, book talk, conference with teacher, etc.)

Others:

Appendix J: Session 2, Activity 2-Presenter Notes and PowerPoint Slides

Activity #2 presenter procedures:

- Share important components for a successful free reading program. Provide the accompanying pages and PowerPoint slides with each of the components.

1. Classroom environment:

- Have participants imagine the place in their homes where they most enjoy reading. Share where these places are and why they choose to read there.
- Have participants describe ways they could make their classrooms better imitate their favorite reading spots.

2. Book Selection

- Have participants list where students usually get the books they are reading.
- Have participants list the types of books favored by most of the students in their class.
- Have participants list the strengths and weaknesses in the book selection available and brainstorm ways to strengthen their book selection (ex: ask for donations from home, share classroom libraries with other teachers, etc.)
- Share the Interest and Wide Reading Inventory by Clausen-Grace and Kelley as a sample of how to better target your students' reading interests.
- Provide Wutz and Wedwick's article *BOOKMATCH: Scaffolding Book Selection for Independent Reading* for participants to take with them and read if they need direction about how to teach kids to pick an appropriate book.

3. Social Interaction

- Ask participants this question: When you are reading or have just read a really good book, what do you normally do? Most teacher groups will have some participants who will answer that they *tell* someone about it.

- Have participants list some ways they could give students opportunities to share what they are reading.
- Provide samples of response questions that can be asked from student to student or from teacher to student.
- Provide samples of how students can do a book share for the class or for a small group.

4. Teacher Modeling

- Provide tips for implementing teacher read-alouds.
- Allow time for teachers to share additional tips

Component #1 Classroom Environment

- Lighting
- Space
- Furniture
- Comfort items (pillows, stuffed animals, etc)
- Extra Noises

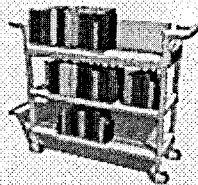


Strengths of your classroom?

Areas of improvement in your classroom?

Component #2 Book Selection

- What types of books are available to your kids?
- What types of books do your kids most choose and enjoy reading?
- How could you improve the book selection for your students?



Component #3 Social Interaction

- Students say books shared by peers are the #1 reason for choosing a new book.
- How do you provide kids a chance to share what they read?
- List some questions kids can ask each other or teachers can ask kids about the book they are reading.



Component #4 Teacher Modeling

- Read often!
- Model correct fluency
- Sometimes allow students to choose the book you will read
- Read both fiction and nonfiction
- Read series books or books by authors with many available books
- Choose books with rich vocabulary



Appendix K: Session 2, Activity 3-Presenter Notes and Handouts

Activity #3 presenter procedures:

- Provide background about Clausen-Grace and Kelley's attempt to reform their classroom free reading time to be more effective for their students.
- Divide teachers into four groups and provide each group of teachers with one section of Clausen-Grace and Kelley's article *You Can't Hide in R5: Restructuring Independent Reading to Be More Strategic and Engaging*
- The Five different sections would include
 1. Read and Relax
 2. Reflect and Respond
 3. Rap
 4. Role of the Teacher
- After the teachers have had a chance to become familiar with their section of the article, they will complete the jigsaw activity and "teach" what they learned to members of the other groups who did not read the same section.
- When all teachers have been able to present, lead a brief discussion about whether or not any of these modifications would work in their classrooms, what they might like to try, etc.

Homework for participants

- Using the provided worksheet, observe a classroom at free reading time. Be prepared to report back to the group.
- Email these questions to a teacher in another district or state. Record the teacher's grade level or subject taught. Be prepared to report back to the group.
 1. Do you allow students free reading time in your classroom?
 2. If no, why not?
 3. If yes, answer these questions:
 - How often?
 - For how long during the session?

- Do you have a name for free reading time?
- Do students have a choice of books, or are they assigned?
- Is there any response activity required?
- What do you (the teacher) do while the kids are reading?
- How do you know that this time is effective for your students?
- Are there any problems that regularly occur during this time?

Component #1

Classroom Environment



Think of these Components:

- **Lighting**
- **Space**
- **Furniture**
- **Comfort items (pillows, stuffed animals, etc)**
- **Extra noises (furnaces, outdoor noise, etc)**

Strengths of your classroom environment:

Ways you could improve your environment:

Component #2 Book Selection



1=very good 2=fair 3=poor

Please rate:

___ the number of books available
represented

___ the variety of reading levels

___ selection of fiction

___ selection on nonfiction

___ variety of reading materials
(ex: books, magazines, comics,
Newspapers, etc.)

___ variety of genres represented

Types of books most chosen or read by your students:

**Do you currently directly teach your students how to pick
out an appropriate book? Yes No**

If yes, how do you teach it?

**Please brainstorm ways that you could improve the book
selection available to students in your classroom:**

FIGURE 1
BOOKMATCH classroom poster

- B** **Book length**
 ✓ Is this a good length for me?
 ✓ Is it too little, just right, or too much?
 ✓ Do I feel like committing to this book?
- O** **Ordinary language**
 ✓ Turn to any page and read aloud.
 ✓ Does it sound natural?
 ✓ Does it flow? Does it make sense?
- O** **Organization**
 ✓ How is the book structured?
 ✓ Am I comfortable with the print size and number of words on a page?
 ✓ Are chapters short or long?
- K** **Knowledge prior to book**
 ✓ Read the title, view the cover page, or read the summary on the back of the book.
 ✓ What do I already know about this topic, author, or illustrator?
- M** **Manageable text**
 ✓ Begin reading the book.
 ✓ Are the words in the book easy, just right, or hard?
 ✓ Do I understand what I read?
- A** **Appeal to genre**
 ✓ What is the genre?
 ✓ Have I read this genre before?
 ✓ Do I like or expect to like this genre?
- T** **Topic appropriateness**
 ✓ Am I comfortable with the topic of this book?
 ✓ Do I feel like I am ready to read about this topic?
- C** **Connection**
 ✓ Can I relate to this book?
 ✓ Does this book remind me of anything or anyone?
- H** **High Interest**
 ✓ Am I interested in the topic of this book?
 ✓ Am I interested in the author/illustrator?
 ✓ Do others recommend this book?

FIGURE 3
BOOKMATCH survey

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| Do I look at the length of the book? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Do I look at how much I already know about the topic? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Do I look at how difficult the words and concepts are? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Do I look at the genre? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Do I look at how appropriate the topic is for my age or maturity? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Do I look at how I can relate to the book? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Do I look at how interested I am in the topic/subject, author, illustrator, etc.? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Do I look at how the book is organized (layout/format)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Do I look at the style of writing (natural language that flows)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| How often do I finish the book I select? | Always 5 | Usually 4 | Sometimes 3 | Rarely 2 | Never 1 |
| How often do I choose a book because I am familiar with the author? | Always 5 | Usually 4 | Sometimes 3 | Rarely 2 | Never 1 |
| What are some reasons why I might not finish a book I start reading? | | | | | |

Note. From "BOOKMATCH: Scaffolding Book Selection for Independent Reading," by J.A. Wutz and L. Wedwick, 2005, *The Reading Teacher*, 59, p. 20. Copyright 2005 by the International Reading Association.

FIGURE 8
BOOKMATCH student form

| Criteria for choosing books | Student comments |
|--|------------------|
| B Book length ✓ Is this a good length for me? ✓ Is it too little, just right, or too much? ✓ Do I feel like committing to this book? | |
| O Ordinary language ✓ Turn to any page and read aloud. ✓ Does it sound natural? ✓ Does it flow? Does it make sense? | |
| O Organization ✓ How is the book structured? ✓ Am I comfortable with the print size and number of words on a page? ✓ Are chapters short or long? | |
| K Knowledge prior to book ✓ Read the title, view the cover page, or read the summary on the back of the book. ✓ What do I already know about this topic, author, or illustrator? | |
| M Manageable text ✓ Begin reading the book. ✓ Are the words in the book easy, just right, or hard? ✓ Do I understand what I read? | |
| A Appeal to genre ✓ What is the genre? ✓ Have I read this genre before? ✓ Do I like or expect to like this genre? | |
| T Topic appropriateness ✓ Am I comfortable with the topic of this book? ✓ Do I feel like I am ready to read about this topic? | |
| C Connection ✓ Can I relate to this book? ✓ Does this book remind me of anything or anyone? | |
| H High interest ✓ Am I interested in the topic of this book? ✓ Am I interested in the author/illustrator? ✓ Do others recommend this book? | |

Component #3

Social Interaction

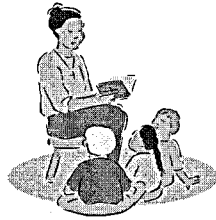


Please list ideas for how students could share what they are reading with others:

Some interview questions that students or teachers could ask about what was read:

- **What happened in your story today?**
- **Why did you pick this book?**
- **Who is your favorite character? (fiction)**
- **What was something you learned? (nonfiction)**
- **How did the book make you feel?**
- **What did this book make you think of?**
- **What are you still wondering about?**
- **What do you wish the author would have changed?**
- **Others?**

Component #4 Teacher Modeling



- **Make time to read aloud to students as often as possible**
- **Take care to model correct fluency (expression, reading rate, etc.)**
- **Occasionally allow students to choose the books you will read.**
- **Read a variety of fiction and nonfiction books**
- **Read books that are part of a series or by an author with many published books, to get kids interested in reading more of the series or more by that author on their own (ex: Boxcar Children, Magic Tree House, Eric Carle books for younger students, Roald Dahl, etc)**
- **Choose books with rich vocabulary to enhance student exposure**

Other ideas?

Observation Form

Name of teacher _____

Grade level _____

Time of day observed _____

Name (if any) of free reading time _____

Describe student activities _____

Describe teacher activities _____

Things that are working well _____

Any things observed that are obstructing effective reading?

Other comments _____

Exit Survey Session #2

Please complete this survey as completely as possible. Names are optional!

1 disagree 2 unsure 3 agree

1. _____ Materials presented were relevant to my teaching and my classroom.
2. _____ Presentation kept me engaged and active throughout.
3. _____ Presenter was prepared to answer questions raised.
4. _____ I learned something new and helpful from this presentation.
5. Most helpful part of today's session?
6. Questions I still have or things I hope will be covered during future sessions....

Appendix L: Session 3, Objectives & Materials

Session 3 Objectives:

- Teachers will share out observations of other teachers' free reading program implementation.
- Teachers will share successes in their own classrooms, as well as those they observed or heard from.
- Presenter will share personal procedures for free reading in her classroom.
- Teachers will be come up with a free reading plan to try in their own classroom
- Teachers will be provided question and answer time to wrap up anything they feel they still need to learn about or have concerns about.

Materials needed:

Computer, projector, and PowerPoint presentation

Large poster paper, markers

Stickers

UNI video of The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Planning paper

Exit survey

Attitude Survey

Appendix M: Session 3, Activity 1-Presenter Notes

Activity #1 presenter procedures:

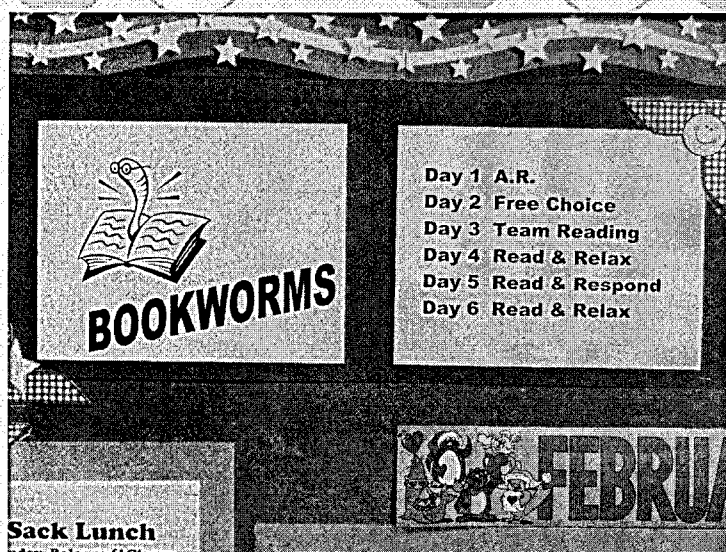
- Discuss in small teacher groups the information that you discovered while observing other teachers' classrooms or from other teachers who responded to your email.
- Come up with a list to share with the group of the top three most successful things you saw or learned.
- Groups will share out what they learned and presenter will record on a large poster paper.
- When all groups have shared, teachers will be given star stickers.
- Teachers can come up to the list and stick stars by which of these successful things they are already doing in their classrooms to give a visual of how many things are already going well.
- Teachers will be given one smiley sticker each.
- Teachers will come up and put their smiley sticker next to something they are not currently doing in their classroom, but they would like to try in the future.

Appendix N: Session 3 , Activity 2-Preseigner Notes, PowerPoint Slides, and Handouts

Activity #2 presenter procedures:

- Share one model for free reading, “Bookworms” used in Amy Prime’s 2nd grade classroom.

Bookworms! Mrs. Prime's Classroom

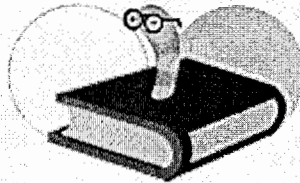


Bookworm Procedures



- We do Bookworms first thing in the morning after taking attendance.
- Students use time before the bell rings to have a book or books selected and have all drink and bathroom needs taken care of.
- Depending upon the cycle day, we spend between 15-30 minutes on Bookworms.

Book Selection

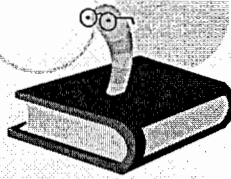


- Books may be selected from the classroom library, the school library, a shared 2nd-3rd grade book cart located in the hallway, or brought from home.



Read and Relax

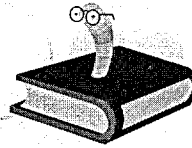
- Find a quiet spot in the room
- Get comfortable
- Enjoy your book!
- No accountability element



I can circulate to see what students are reading or conference with kids about their reading during this time.

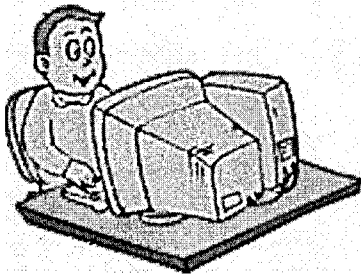


Accelerated Reader (A.R.)



- Choose a book at appropriate color level
- Same procedure as Read and Relax except that students must take and pass an AR quiz after reading
- If the quiz is not passed the student chooses another book and repeats the process

AR is used as a measure of comprehension at my school, so that is why it is (sparingly) included in my free reading program.

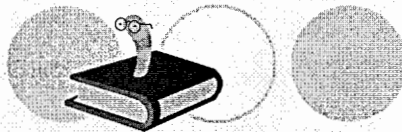


Read and Respond



- Students follow the same procedures as Read and Relax
- When book is finished or time is up, students complete whatever response activity is provided by the teacher.
- A sample log I created is provided. Students use sentence stems to write about what they read.

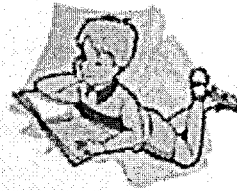
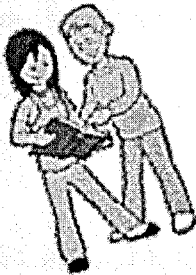
Team Reading



- Students choose a buddy or a group of three to read with.
- Students may
 1. Have one person read to the rest of the group
 2. Each read their own books but sit together
 3. Take turns reading their books to each other
- No response activity is required

Free Choice

- Students may choose to Read and Relax, do AR, Team Read, or Read and Respond
- Choice can be motivational!



Other components of the Bookworm Program

- Teacher Read-Aloud to end each day and other times throughout the day
- Student Readers
A student reads a practiced book aloud to the class
- Book Share presentations
A student presents on a favorite book that they think others in the class might like to read

Name _____ Date _____

Title _____

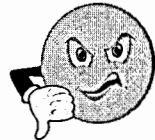
Author _____

This book is ☐ Fiction
Make Believe

☐ Nonfiction
True with real facts

This is a ☐ Vacation Book ☐ Just Right Book ☐ Someday
Book

I thought this book was



Name _____ Date _____

Title _____

Author _____

This book is ☐ Fiction
Make Believe

☐ Nonfiction
True with real facts

This is a ☐ Vacation Book ☐ Just Right Book ☐ Someday
Book

I thought this book was





Bookworms Read and Respond

- **Today in my story**
- **This book made me think of**
- **Something new I learned from this book was**
- **I would like to find another book like this because**
- **I will not pick another book like this because**
- **I wish the author would have**
- **My favorite part of the book was when**
- **This book made me feel**
- **This book reminded me of**
- **I'm still wondering**
- **I can see a clear picture of**

Appendix O: Session 3, Activity 3-Presenter Notes and Handouts

Activity #3 presenter procedures:

- Teachers will be given time to plan out what they would like to implement in their classroom as a free reading time.
- Presenter and other teachers will be available to collaborate with each other to come up with a plan they feel will be most beneficial to their current group of children.

My Free Reading Plan

Teacher name _____

Grade Level _____

Name of free reading program? _____

This time will occur: **daily** **every other day** **weekly**
other

When during your school day? _____

Describe your plan (be sure to include what the student *and* the teacher expectations/procedures will be): _____

How will you monitor whether or not your plan is effective?

Appendix P: Session 3, Activity 4-Presenter Notes

Activity #4 Question and Answer session:

- Teachers will be given time to generate any questions they still have about free reading time in their classrooms.
- Presenter will answer questions or make note of them to get back to the questioner when an adequate answer has been located.

Appendix Q: Session 3, Activity 5-Presenter Notes and Handouts

Activity #5 presenter procedures:

- **Present the Very Hungry Caterpillar from UNI as a reminder about the power of allowing students time to look at books in the classroom.**
- **Have teachers complete the exit survey and the Attitude Survey before leaving.**

Classroom Reading Survey

1. Do you currently provide free reading time to your students? Yes No

If yes, how often? _____ times per week

If no, complete this sentence: I do not use free reading in my classroom because _____.

2. Do you currently read books aloud to your students? Yes No

If yes, how often? _____ times per week

3. Rate your feelings. I believe allowing free reading time during the school day is:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------|----------|
| Not at all important | | Very Important | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. Complete this sentence: Free reading time in a classroom should look like _____.

5. Complete this sentence: During free reading time the teacher should be _____.

6. Check all statements that you believe are true:

☐ **Free reading is a waste of classroom time.**

☐ **Students should be allowed to choose any book to read during free reading time.**

☐ **Teachers should also be reading a book during free reading time.**

☐ **Guided oral reading is more beneficial to promoting reading skills than free reading.**

☐ **Free reading is only beneficial after students are successful independent readers.**

☐ **Free reading is only effective if student are reading books at their current reading level.**

Exit Survey Session #3

Please complete this survey as completely as possible. Names are optional!

1 disagree 2 unsure 3 agree

1. _____ Materials presented were relevant to my teaching and my classroom.
2. _____ Presentation kept me engaged and active throughout.
3. _____ Presenter was prepared to answer questions raised.
4. _____ I learned something new and helpful from this presentation.
5. _____ I would recommend this workshop to a colleague.
6. The most helpful part of these workshop sessions was...
7. If this workshop is presented again, which part or parts could the presenter skip or improve upon?